

for Individuals with Special Needs



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**Emergency
Preparedness**
for Individuals
with Special Needs

Introduction

Emergency Preparedness Personal Checklist for People with Special Needs

Disasters can strike at any time whether by a natural event such as a hurricane, snow storm, tornado or a terrorist attack. It can be a very stressful and dangerous time for you and your family. However, there are things you can do now. Preparing for an emergency takes time and effort, but you can take important steps to better prepare you and your family for an emergency.

During a disaster, you may be more vulnerable and need additional assistance such as with evacuation, hearing emergency warnings, and sheltering. You may have a disability, medical condition, limited mobility, or other condition.

There are things that you can do to be better prepared such as creating an emergency supply kit, collecting special needs supplies, completing an emergency contact list, and creating an emergency health information card. This book is intended to help you in preparing for an emergency.

The following checklist is provided to assist you in taking the first steps to be prepared. The checklist should be completed in order, one activity at a time. Be sure to fill in the date as you complete each activity on the checklist. If you are unable to complete this checklist on your own, encourage a friend or family member to assist you.

Date Completed ▼	Activity ▼
	Establish a Personal Support Network
	Create an Emergency Supply Kit
	Collect Special Needs Supplies
	Collect “Carry-With-You” Supplies
	Conduct an Ability Assessment
	Complete an Emergency Contact List
	Collect and store Emergency Documents
	Prepare an Emergency Kit for your service animal or pet
	Create an Emergency Health Information Card

Establish a Personal Support Network



Everyone should have a personal support network which includes friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers, and neighbors. Identify a minimum of three people where you regularly spend a significant part of your week: job, home, school, or volunteer site.

Your personal support network can check with you in an emergency to ensure you are okay.

In spite of your best planning, sometimes a personal support network must be created on the spot. For example, you may find yourself in a shelter and needing to assemble help for immediate assistance. Think about what you will need, how you want it done, and what kind of person you would select.

6 Six Important Items for Your Personal Support Network:

- Make arrangements, prior to an emergency, for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if needed, offer assistance.
- Exchange important keys.
- Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans, and emergency health information card.
- Practice a communication system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working.
- Notify each other when you are going out-of-town and when you will return.
- Learn about each others questions, needs and know how to help each other in an emergency.

Supplies

Create An Emergency Supply Kit



An emergency supply kit includes basic items such as water, food, clothing, and supplies. You need to have at least a three day supply of these items.

- ☐ Water - One gallon per person per day.
- ☐ Food - Non-persishable items such as foods that require no refrigeration. Include a manual can opener.
- ☐ Clothing- A change of clothing.
- ☐ Supplies- Battery-powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, paper and pens, and plastic utensils.

For more information on how to create a family disaster plan and emergency supply kit, visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY, TTY# 1-800-464-6161

Collect Special Needs Supplies



In an emergency, supplies may be limited. Do not expect shelters or other first aid stations to meet your supply needs. In addition to your supplies kept in your emergency kit, you should plan for enough special needs supplies for up to two weeks. Store supplies in areas you anticipate will be easy to reach after a disaster and labeled in a separate bag.

Supplies to consider:

- ☐ Respiratory equipment
- ☐ Medications, prescription and non-prescription
- ☐ Disposable supplies such as dressings and catheters
- ☐ Eyeglasses
- ☐ Batteries for hearing aides, communication devices

Collect Carry-With-You Supplies



These supplies can be kept in your car or at your place of work. Using a fanny pack or back pack is ideal.

- ☐ Emergency Health Information Card.
- ☐ Instructions on personal assistance needs and how best to provide them.
- ☐ Copy of Emergency Documents.
- ☐ Essential medications/copies of prescriptions (at least one week supply).
- ☐ Flashlight on a key ring.
- ☐ Signaling device (whistle, beeper, bell, screecher).
- ☐ Small battery-operated radio and extra batteries.

Assessment and Emergency Information

Conduct An Ability Assessment



It is important to evaluate your capabilities, limitations and needs, as well as your surroundings to determine what type of help you will need in an emergency.

1. Will you be able to independently shut off the necessary utilities (gas, water, electricity)?
2. Can you operate a fire extinguisher?
3. Will you be able to carry your emergency supply kit?
4. Have you moved or secured large objects that might block your escape path?
5. How will you evacuate? Be aware of barriers and possible hazards to a clear path of exit. Change what you are able to change (clear obstacles from aisles; secure large, heavy items such as bookcases that may fall to block your path). Plan alternate exit paths.

Complete An Emergency Contact List



An emergency contact list includes phone numbers of relatives or friends who live outside of your immediate area that act as a clearinghouse for information about you and your family after a disaster or other emergency.

The list should also include:

- Your personal support network
- Equipment vendor
- Doctor
- Utility company
- Employer
- School
- Day care center
- Household members
- Alternate dialysis facility (if needed)

Collect and Store Emergency Documents



Store emergency documents in home emergency supply kits. Include information on:

- Medical equipment
- Medications
- Family Records
- Wills
- Deeds
- Social Security Number
- Bank and Credit Card Information

These should be stored in sealed plastic/freezer bags with a copy sent to personal support network and out-of-state contacts.

Service Animals and Pets



I.D.s and Licenses

Make sure your service animals and pets have I.D. tags with both your home telephone number and that of a primary out-of-town contact person. Make sure your animal's license and vaccinations are current.

Animal Care

Plan how your pets will be cared for if you have to evacuate. Pets, in contrast to service animals, may not be allowed in emergency shelters due to health regulations, so have some animal shelters identified! Contact your local Red Cross chapter or local office of emergency management for guidance.

Establish relationships with other animal owners in your neighborhood. In case you are not home, there will be someone to help your animal.



Alternate Mobility Cues

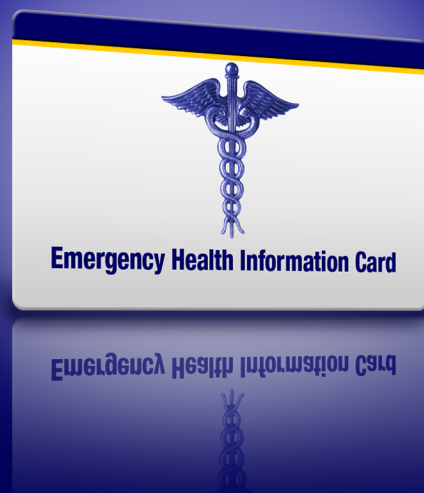
Pets and service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented in and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.

Animal Emergency Kit

Put supplies in a pack that your animal can carry in case you need to evacuate. The kit should include:

- ☐ Bowls for water and food
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Water (1 gallon per day per animal)
- ☐ Blanket for bedding
- ☐ Plastic bags and paper towels for disposing of feces
- ☐ Neosporin ointment for minor wounds. (Animals can easily get cut after an emergency. Ask your veterinarian if there is anything specific you should include for your animal.)
- ☐ Your service animal or pet's favorite toy, blanket, etc.
- ☐ Extra leash/harness

Emergency Health Information Card



Individuals who have a disability or medical condition can develop an emergency health information card.

What Is An Emergency Health Card



An emergency health information card communicates to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly help evacuate you. An emergency health information card should contain information about medications, equipment you use, allergies and sensitivities, communication difficulties you may have, preferred treatment and treatment-medical providers, and important contact people.

Copies of Card

Make multiple copies of your emergency health information card to keep in emergency supply kits, emergency carry-with-you kits, car, work, wallet, purse (behind driver's license or primary identification card), and wheelchair pack.

Portions of this publication were adapted from the Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco and US Department of Homeland Security.



Delaware Health and Social Services
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Public Health Preparedness Section